

# **2016 Massachusetts Community Transportation Coordination Conference**

## **Community Shuttles**

### **Presenters**

- Jonathan Church, Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA)
- Richard McCarthy, Town of Dedham
- Scott Zadakis, CrossTown Connect

### **Facilitator**

- Aniko Laszlo, MassDOT

### **Westborough Shuttle –Jonathan Church**

- Westborough wanted a shuttle to connect commuter rail with Office Park and provide services along Main Street
- From 2011 to 2013, employees in the office park increased by 5000
- Large companies with a lack of parking promote commuter rail
- Challenge: demand unknown
- The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMPRC) and WRTA partnered with employers and town to market service and benefits
- Funding came from MBTA assessment
- Service began in December 2013
- Future challenge is how to increase ridership

### **Cross Acton Transit – Scott Zadakis**

- 14-passenger bus connecting different parts of town in Acton, operated by TransAction Associates
- Started November 2015. 100 riders in the first month. 194 riders in April 2016.
- How did we get there? Advocates and political will, community need, a model to aspire to (WRTAs Westborough Shuttle), and lots of data – used data from other local services to predict demand.
- Fare is \$1 to make available to everyone. LRTA used local assessments. Acton residents voted to fund. Grants available for vehicle acquisition.
- Marketing – name and brand, posters, flyers, promos at community events, Twitter, and local TV

### **Dedham Local Bus – Rich McCarthy**

- The Dedham Shuttle existed for over 30 years but eroded over time. It was fully funded by MBTA originally, but that decreased over time and the amount available to town was \$25K.
- Dedham wanted to enhance senior transportation without losing the shuttle service. In 2013 they formed a group to determine how to improve bus service and make it more useful for riders and the community. This group did ride-alongs and determined that the service was inadequate.
- An RFP was done to secure reliable service. They wanted an identifiable Dedham bus with 13 stop loop in 1 hour with schedule stops as well as flag zones. TransAction Associates signed a 36 month contract.
- The Town took ownership in January 2015 and is transporting about 300-400 riders per month.

- Public meetings were held, and there are currently 26 stops including at public housing, town center, senior center, commercial center.
- Previously, the fare was 50 cents for adults, 25 cents for kids, and free for senior and persons with disabilities. Fares were increased to \$1.50 for adults, \$1.00 for children, seniors and persons with disabilities. The town explained that they entered into a multiyear contract and explained that better service costs a little more.
- Next steps: they are now looking at ridership data to create two 30-minute loops to shorten the route.
- This route does connect to other MBTA routes and only runs 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, so it is not yet convenient for commuters, but future plans may include longer service hours.

## Q&A

- What steps are taken to ensure all vehicles are accessible and drivers are trained?
  - The Cross-Acton Transit vehicle is not currently handicap accessible, but provides support with another service operated by CrossTown Connect.
  - All WRTA vehicles including the Westborough shuttle are accessible, and all drivers are trained in wheelchair securement.
  - Dedham on the Move is an 18 passenger van with 2 wheelchair positions. All training is done by TransAction Associates.
- Please explain MBTA assessment funding.
  - Jonathan explained that this funding is available for towns that have a commuter rail station or are adjacent to a town with a commuter rail station. The assessment is based on population. Communities can access those funds to work with RTA to provide service that is comparable.
- These routes are not money makers, so how do you continue to support?
  - Rich McCarthy said that it is for the overall public good, and that is why the town maintains it.
- Who manages time and activities?
  - Westborough: economic development coordinator, marketing firm, local cable access provider
  - Acton: part time transportation coordinator and selectmen